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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

23 December 1985

EYES ONLY--

The Honorable Edwin Meese III  
The Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Ed,

There was a foul-up at the White House today and I had to leave for New York to keep a date there. So, I sent the attached to the President with the following comment:

"On polygraphing, I was surprised that you had not been shown the statement CIA felt obliged to make when George stated publicly that asking him to be polygraphed would be an expression of distrust. There was great concern about the impact of this on [ ] people in the Intelligence Community if this imputation was not challenged. A copy of my statement is attached."

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Yours,

William J. Casey

Attachments:  
CIA Statement  
Memorandum re Polygraphing

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19 December 1985

CIA REACTION TO SECRETARY OF STATE SHULTZ'S STATEMENT ON POLYGRAPHS

Thousands of people in the intelligence community submit to polygraph examinations in recognition of the need to protect the nation's most vital secrets and because of the proven usefulness of the polygraph as an investigative tool. They understand that the government, in granting access to the nation's secrets, also bestows special trust, as well as a shared responsibility for protecting those secrets. The number of leaks of sensitive classified information in recent years makes clear that a growing number of those given special trust have not lived up to their obligations. The reality is that the loss of classified information is severely damaging our foreign policy and our intelligence capabilities. The use of polygraphing in the intelligence community has proven to be the best deterrent to the misuse of sensitive information. There is an acute need to extend its selective, careful use to branches of government that receive that information. The DCI and his predecessors voluntarily have been polygraphed, believing in the importance of setting an example that all those with access must do what they can to protect our secrets and to cooperate in identifying those who do not.

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23 Dec 85POLYGRAPHING

- By law, the DCI has responsibility for protecting sources and methods.
- The polygraph has been an essential tool for over 30 years.
- Shultz's public assertion that asking a person to be polygraphed means that he is not trusted, if not refuted, would have a damaging impact on [ ] people who have been and are now subject to being polygraphed. 25X1
- I and others in the Intelligence Community thought it necessary to make a clarifying statement.
- Loss of critical intelligence sources and methods investments over recent months has been appalling.
- Right now, the Washington Post is holding information which can destroy a source of the highest importance.
- The Executive Department has responsibility to strengthen discipline in the handling of classified information.
- This means restoring a penalty for misuse of information. Right now there is a wide-spread impression that leaking is risk free and nobody cares.
- The CIA's experience in polygraphing indicates its value.
- 25X1 -- In 1985, [ ] new applicants were polygraphed.
- 25X1 -- [ ] staff employees were repolygraphed. Only [ ] people were polygraphed on a special issue--suspicion or allegation of theft or leak or some specific violation. [ ] 25X1
- 25X1 -- About 20 percent of those polygraphed were disapproved. About [ ] out of [ ] disapprovals based on the polygraph were for drug use, criminal activity or dishonesty. 25X1

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-- [ ] such disapprovals were for abuse of loyalty or mishandling of classified information.

The flick of the needle is never a basis for disapproval, it is only an occasion to ask follow-up questions. 90 percent of disapprovals of those who have taken the polygraph are based on admissions. Only 10 people last year were either terminated or penalized on the basis of a deceptive reaction without having admitted culpability. Of some [ ] present employees repolygraphed, 20 were terminated or given an administrative penalty.

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At CIA, during my tenure, the polygraph has resulted in penalizing five individuals for the unauthorized disclosure of information. At least there is a perception here that leaking is not risk free.